

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An absorbent garment comprising:
 - a body panel having a bodyside surface; and
 - an absorbent composite having a garment-side surface, a longitudinally
- 5 extending length and a laterally extending width and comprising a backsheet, a topsheet and a retention portion disposed between said backsheet and said topsheet, wherein said garment-side surface of said absorbent composite is connected to said bodyside surface of said body panel along at least a longitudinally extending location, and wherein said absorbent composite
- 10 comprises a longitudinally extending side margin extending laterally outboard from said location and terminating in a free edge.

2. The invention of claim 1 wherein said absorbent composite comprises a first and second longitudinally opposed end regions, and wherein said body
- 15 panel comprises a first body panel connected to said first end region and a second body panel connected to said second end region, wherein said first and second body panels are longitudinally spaced apart, and wherein said absorbent composite is connected to said first body panel along at least one longitudinally extending first location, and wherein said absorbent composite is connected to
- 20 said second body panel along at least one longitudinally extending second location, and wherein said side margin extends laterally outboard from each of said first and second locations.

3. The invention of claim 2 wherein said first body panel comprises a first
- 25 pair of side body panels and wherein said second body panel comprises a second pair of side body panels, wherein each of said side body panels comprises an outboard terminal edge and an inboard terminal edge, wherein said at least one first location comprises a pair of first locations and wherein said at least one second location comprises a pair of second locations, and
- 30 wherein said inboard terminal edges of each of said first pair of side body panels is attached to said absorbent composite at one of said pairs of said first

locations respectively and wherein said inboard terminal edge of each of said second pair of side body panels is attached to said absorbent composite at one of said pairs of said second locations, and wherein said absorbent composite comprises opposite side margins extending laterally outboard from each of said first and second locations.

4. The invention of claim 1 wherein said side margin is formed from said backsheet.

10 5. The invention of claim 1 wherein said side margin is formed from said topsheet.

6. The invention of claim 5 wherein side margin comprises a first portion of said topsheet folded over a second portion of said topsheet, wherein said folded first and second portions form a folded edge defining said free edge of said side margin.

7. The invention of claim 6 wherein said side margin further comprises a portion of said backsheet disposed between said first and second portions of said topsheet.

8. The invention of claim 1 wherein said side margin is formed from said topsheet and said backsheet.

25 9. The invention of claim 1 wherein said retention portion has opposite lateral side edges, and wherein side margin extends laterally outboard from one of said side edges of said retention portion.

10. The invention of claim 1 wherein said side margin comprises a longitudinally extending elastic element.

11. The invention of claim 1 wherein said absorbent composite comprises opposite side margins extending laterally outboard on each side of said absorbent composite and terminating in opposite free edges.

5 12. The invention of claim 1 wherein said location is laterally spaced a first distance from said free edge at a first position and wherein said location is laterally spaced a second distance from said free edge at a second position, wherein said first distance is greater than said second distance and wherein said first and second positions are longitudinally spaced.

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13. The invention of claim 12 wherein said second position is closer to an end of said absorbent composite than said first position.

14. An absorbent garment comprising:

15 a longitudinally spaced first and second body panel each having a bodyside surface; and

an absorbent composite having a longitudinally extending length, a laterally extending width and longitudinally opposed first and second end regions, said absorbent composite comprising a backsheet, a topsheet and a retention portion disposed between said backsheet and said topsheet, wherein
20 said first end region of said absorbent composite is connected to said bodyside surface of said first body panel and wherein said second end region of said absorbent composite is connected to said bodyside surface of said second body panel, wherein said absorbent composite comprises a pair of laterally opposed
25 side margins terminating in opposite outboard free edges, wherein said side margins are not attached to said first and second body panels.

15. The invention of claim 14 wherein said first body panel comprises a first pair of side body panels and wherein said second body panel comprises a
30 second pair of side body panels, wherein each of said side body panels

comprises an outboard terminal edge and an inboard terminal edge, wherein said inboard terminal edge is connected to said absorbent composite.

16. The invention of claim 14 wherein said side margin is formed from said
5 backsheet.

17. The invention of claim 14 wherein said side margin is formed from said
topsheet.

10 18. The invention of claim 17 wherein side margin comprises a first portion of said topsheet folded over a second portion of said topsheet, wherein said folded first and second portions form a folded edge defining said free edge of said side margin.

15 19. The invention of claim 18 wherein said side margin further comprises a portion of said backsheet disposed between said first and second portions of said topsheet.

20 20. The invention of claim 14 wherein said side margin is formed from said
topsheet and said backsheet.

21. The invention of claim 14 wherein said retention portion has opposite lateral side edges, and wherein side margins extend laterally outboard from said side edges of said retention portion.

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22. The invention of claim 14 wherein said side margins comprise a longitudinally extending elastic element.

23. The invention of claim 14 wherein said side margin has a first lateral
30 width at a first position and a second lateral width at a second position, wherein said first and second positions are longitudinally spaced.

24. A method of providing protection against bodily exudates with an absorbent garment comprising:

providing said absorbent garment comprising a body panel having a
 5 bodyside surface and an absorbent composite having a longitudinally extending length and a laterally extending width and comprising a backsheet, a topsheet and a retention portion disposed between said backsheet and said topsheet, wherein said absorbent composite is connected to said bodyside surface of said body panel and comprises laterally opposed side margins extending laterally
 10 outboard and terminating in a free edge, wherein said side margins are not attached to said body panel; and

applying said absorbent garment to a body of a user.

25. The method of claim 24 wherein said absorbent composite has a
 15 bodyside surface and wherein at least a portion of said bodyside surface of said side margins is in contact with the body of the user.

26. The invention of claim 24 wherein said side margins are formed from said backsheet.

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27. The invention of claim 24 wherein said side margins are formed from said topsheet.

28. The invention of claim 27 wherein each of said side margins comprises a
 25 first portion of said topsheet folded over a second portion of said topsheet, wherein said folded first and second portions form a folded edge defining said free edge of said side margin.

29. The invention of claim 28 wherein each of said side margins further
 30 comprises a portion of said backsheet disposed between said first and second portions of said topsheet.

30. The invention of claim 24 wherein said side margin is formed from said topsheet and said backsheet.
- 5 31. The invention of claim 24 wherein said retention portion has opposite lateral side edges, and wherein side margins extend laterally outboard from said side edges of said retention portion.
32. The invention of claim 24 wherein said side margins comprise a
- 10 longitudinally extending elastic element.